



REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPS) IN GREECE: THE CAUSES, JOURNEY, EFFECTS, AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE MIGRATION OF REFUGEES AND IDPS

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ABSTRACT

A solution for refugees is getting together a group of volunteers who can be at the airport or the ports, greet them once they arrive, introduce them to the country, talk to them about their rights and duties according to Greek law, and even provide shelter to unaccompanied children. We need activities, volunteers, and programs, to ensure that these people can cover their basic needs (Relief International, 2023). The number of asylum seekers is rising, and the flow of refugees too when comparing the years 2021 and 2022 (Ansa et al., 2022). Therefore refugees are a major issue for the country. Migration is caused by sociopolitical factors, demographic & economic factors, and last but not least environmental factors (National Geographic, 2010). More than half of the migrants come to Greece from countries in conflict, mainly the Syrian Arab Republic. Afghanistan and Iraqis comprise the next biggest group. Some are forced to leave their place of habitual residence because of natural disasters (Heilmann, 2015). It was found that individual support is greatly needed. Decisions must be made while being mindful of the fact that the future generation is the children, and some of them are refugees.

KEYWORDS: Refugees, IDP, migrants, economic growth, migration route, community.

INTRODUCTION

When discussing the topic of refugees and internally displaced people, it is important to first understand the definition of these terms. A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country, because of a major problem there, and is therefore outside of his country of nationality (UNHCR, 2023). An (internally displaced person) is someone who is migrating within a country, and does not cross borders (UN, 2023).

Before investigating the refugees and internally displaced people in Greece, it is important to be aware of the country's location, to help create a clearer vision of the case study. Greece is located in the southernmost of the country's Balkan Peninsula. The country has more than 2000 islands, 170 of which have citizens. The capital city of this country has an area around it named Attiki (Clogg et al., 2023).

The Location

Surrounding Greece is the Aegean Sea (from east to west), the Mediterranean Sea (from the south), and the Ionian sea (from the west). In the northern part of Greece, the Pindos mountains are located (on the mainland). These reach from the Albanian, and North Macedonian frontiers, creating a barrier. These mountains have one of the world's deepest gorges (3600 feet, 1100 meters) (Klaus, 2020).

However, Greece's highest mountain (9500 feet, 219 meters) is called Mount Olympus, located at the border of Macedonia, and Thessaly. The land borders are (from east to west): Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey (National Geographic, 2014).

Causes of Migration

Migration is the cause of several factors. The first one is socio-political factors such as national, religious, racial, and persecution drives. Demographic and economic factors are also included. These refer to the impact of migration on economic growth, and the employment opportunities of the origin of origin on the refugees or internally displaced people are ("Εξερευνώντας τα αίτια της μετανάστευσης" 2020).

Last but not least, environmental factors are a major cause of population movements due to environmental changes (for instance hurricanes, and earthquakes). Unfortunately, Africa is one example of the phenomenon of the climate change force because of the lack of water (Hoffmann, 2020).

When migrating from a country, there are push, and pull factors both the refugees and internally displaced people must consider. Pull factors are the reasons why an individual wants to flee to this specific country. They comprise higher wages, better job opportunities, higher living standards, and educational opportunities (Kyaing Thet, 2014).

War, and perhaps religiously based terrorism is one major push factor. One example of this was the Taliban, a religious and political group that now has power in Afghanistan and over other terrorist groups (jihadists and ISIS militants) who threatened people to join them in Afghanistan ("Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου", 2020).

However, the refugees are not only from Afghanistan but are also from Syria, Iran, Albania, China, Bangladesh, Georgia, Pakistan, Egypt, and India. These refugees have been moving to Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Tios (Crete), Rhodes, Kos, Symi, Leros, Kalymnos, Euros, and Athens. To understand refugees better, it is vital to take key dates from their journeys into consideration first ("Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου", 2020). The first economic migration was created in 1989 in Eastern Europe from the fall of socialist regimes. Then, the immigrants were mainly from Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania. Some were also from African and Asian countries (Sruti Chaganti, 2004).

Nevertheless, this was not the only key date related to refugees. In the first 9 months of 2011, the trend for the Greek - Turkish border was similar to the one in 2010, with the difference of there being a 5% decrease. To be exact, there were 37000 people who crossed the borders (in comparison to 39000). They were refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria, and Morocco.

To conclude, the arrivals increased 5 times compared to the arrivals in 2010 ("Στατιστικά | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου", 2020). Moreover, the ministry of Greece has collected data showing that most refugees have entered Greece through Turkey, despite the sea border of Spain, as in 2010. From January to October 2011, 1700 Algerians entered Greece, on a daily basis. Lastly, another important date is 2020, as the Department of Immigration, and Asylum got recreated after it was abolished in 2019 ("Στατιστικά - UNHCR Ελλάδα", 2022).

The Journey

When the refugees are migrating there are specific routes that they follow. The first one is the Balkan route. This path starts in Turkey and then goes through either Bulgaria or Greece by land and sea. One of the main dangers is taking the boats, and reaching one of the islands. For instance, the boat can easily turn over, and therefore the refugees must try their best to not move. The migrants, however, often take it further north with the goal to reach Slovenia or Hungary, and possibly Germany (Ansa, et al., 2021).

Another route is the eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to Greece by land and sea. It refers to irregular arrivals in Greece, Cyprus, and Bulgaria (European Council, 2023). 85% and more of those arriving in Greece are from countries where there is conflict - such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. Once the refugees arrive, they go to the Reception and Identification Centers (RIC) where they undergo procedures or reception and identification in order to be able to submit an application for international protection (asylum) ("Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου", 2020).

These are found in the following cities and islands in Greece: Diavata, Kos, Leros, Malakasa, Mytilene, Samos, Fylakio, Chios and West Lesbos. Accommodation facilities are located on the mainland: Attiko Alsos, Alexandria, Volo. In total, there are around 28 islands; whereas on the islands of Lesbos, Kos, Samos, Leros and Chios accommodation facilities are also located ("Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου", 2020).

Furthermore, there are the Closed Controlled Access Centers of Islands (C.C. A.C.I) which were created as Regional Operation Units of the Reception and Identification Service. One of the main factors which show why exactly the refugees seeking asylum (an immigrant who has left their country of residence, and

entered another country) in Greece is: being offered decent wages and living conditions while also having the ability of the labor market to assimilate refugees. However, refugees perceive other subjective factors as being even more important - such as the presence of an established community, with its hospitality, living networks, the existence of legislation on family reunification and the role women play in society. More precisely, by coming to Greece, they are hoping for better living standards and opportunities ("Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου", 2020).

The factors that make Greece (and Euope) an attractive destination include the low percentage of the unemployment rate, the low wage rate, higher GDP per capita or perhaps more effectively the Human Development Index, and the health and education systems. Simply, Greece is seen as the gateway to Europe for these people. On the other hand, internally displaced people reach safety with the support the government provides them with; like shelter and food in organized camps (Tramountanis et al., 2022)

The Consequences

When the refugees are moving, they are facing stressors, and this could cause traumatic stress, acculturation stress, resettlement stress, and isolation (World Health Organization, 2021). Meanwhile, the host countries' populations often believe that by refugees entering the country, there is an unexpected rise of asylum seekers which has led the country to major economic and social consequences for health outcomes, and has caused significant challenges for the Greek National Health Service (NHS) ("Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου", 2020).

However, when the refugees leave their home country, there is a loss of financial and information wealth, loss of skilled labor (for instance, if doctors migrate there won't be as many physicians in the country), and negative effects on children (when people migrate they are likely to leave their family behind which can cause the rest of the family growing up with little emotional, and material support), and advantages which are reduction of unemployment, and migrants bringing back skills and contacts which will boost competitiveness, and increase innovation (Prasanna, 2022).

The Proposal

In today's volatile political and environmental landscape, it is vital that nations plan and implement proposals that strive to make the world a better place. For the refugees, a proposal is to have volunteers at the airport and port welcoming them and introducing them to the country. Through this, they would be aware of the necessary documents, social integration programs (Migrant integration centers, Language support to refugees, Integration project Helios, and the Help desk), how, and where to apply to receive for instance their residence permit (ADET). Meanwhile, internally displaced people can be supported through volunteers, programs, and activities such as a program informing them about their rights, and the termination of benefits ("Displaced People", 2022).

Conclusion

The youth are our future, many of them are refugees and internally displaced people ("Internally Displaced Persons | Educate a Child", 2019). It is crucial to take action now in order to support our future generation with compassion. Refugees and internally displaced people must not be deprived of their human rights.

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